DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 508 CS 010 220

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TITLE Increasing Reading Achievement through Repeated Paired Reading.
PUB DATE Aug 90
NOTE 71p.; M.S. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperative Learning; Grade 3; Inferences; Instructional Effectiveness; Primary Education; *Reading Achievement; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Difficulties; *Reading Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Paired Reading

ABSTRACT

A program of paired, repeated reading was developed to improve the achievement in reading comprehension of 14 targeted third-grade students. The program had three basic objectives: (1) to increase literal comprehension by 25%; (2) to increase inference of main idea by 25%; and (3) to increase inference skills of drawing conclusions by 25%. The Qualitative Reading Inventory was administered as a pre- and posttest for assessment. The 14-week reading program involved a daily session of paired repeated reading incorporating critical thinking skills on alternate days. Results indicated that students exceeded the anticipated objectives. Literal comprehension increased by 44%; main idea inference skills increased by 80%; and inference skills of drawing conclusions increased by 60%. (Fourteen references and 10 appendixes including a reading survey, a self-evaluation sheet, and data sheets are attached.) (Author/SR)

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INCREASING READING ACHIEVEMENT

THROUGH REPEATED PAIRED READING

by
Sandra B. Frost

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of
Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
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Signed: Sandra Frost

Abstract

Increasing Reading Achievement Through Paired Repeated Reading.
Frost, Sandra B., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, The Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Reading Achievement/Reading Comprehension/ Reading Fluency/Cooperative Learning/Reading Automaticity, Critical Thinking, Reading Instruction, Reading Deficits, Reading Difficulties, Reading Process, Reading Skills, Critical Thinking.

The author developed and implemented a paired, repeated reading program for 14 targeted third grade students. The program's aim was to improve reading achievement in comprehension. The program contained three basic objectives: (1) to increase literal comprehension by 25 percent; (2) to increase inference of main idea by 25 percent; and (3) to increase inference skills of drawing conclusions by 25 percent. The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) was used for assessment. Students were administered the QRI prior to and after implementation. Results indicated that students exceeded the anticipated objectives. Literal comprehension increased by 44 percent. Main idea increased by 80 percent. Inference skills of drawing conclusion showed a 60 percentage increase. It was concluded that the paired repeated reading program did satisfy the objectives and was recommended for further use in all classrooms in the school.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The setting for this practicum is a neighborhood school. The school was built in 1952 and has recently been renovated. The student body consists of approximately 950 Kindergarten through Sixth Grade students. The student population is integrated racially as a result of the neighboring communities. The ethnic composition of the school is as follows: 58 percent White, 31 percent Black, nine percent Hispanic and two percent Asian. The socio economics of the parents ranges from low to lower middle income blue collar workers. Nearly 60 percent of the practicum school's student population qualifies for free or reduced lunches.

Due to the school's location, most of the student body walks to school. Thirteen buses transport the remaining students from the neighboring communities.

The academic curriculum includes Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Health and Social Studies. Qualifying students have an opportunity to participate in gifted classes in Science and Mathematics. Physical Education, Music and Art are also provided for all students. Additional special services include: Educabally Mentally Retarded; Emotionally Handicapped; Specific Learning Disabilities; and ECIA Chapter I remediation in Mathematics and Reading. Extracurricular activities included chorus and a strings music program.

For the 1989-90 school year, 53 teachers are employed in the school. Of the 53 teachers, 13 hold a Master's Degree or higher. The remaining staff members include one principal, one assistant principal, one guidance counselor, one media specialist and one primary specialist. Support personnel include one administrative secretary, one bookkeeper, one data processing clerk, two clerical secretaries, 13 aids and six custodians.

The practicum author is completing the nineteenth year of teaching. Most of this experience has been in the primary grades. The author is presently a Primary Specialist. This is the first year of service at the school. The responsibilities of the Primary Specialist include the observation of students and monitoring academics progress. Tests and evaluations are administered to the students by the primary specialist to determine academic performance and processing deficits. Guidance and assistance is given to the classroom teacher in modifying curriculum to meet the needs of individual student.

For the purpose of this practicum the target population includes 14 third grade students. This population consists of nine boys and five girls. The ethnic breakdown is 29 percent Black, 14 percent Hispanic, and 57 percent White.

Reading is an essential part of the school curriculum. It is the ultimate, prerequisite skill on which all other academic skills are based (Rossman, 1987). A student's academic success

is often proportional to the ability of the student to read.

Students who are poor readers often have poor self images and develop negative attitudes toward reading, school and learning in general. Unsuccessful readers are frequently disruptive students who vent frustrations with inappropriate behavior. This places an extra burden on the classroom teacher. The teacher must spend valuable instructional time managing student behavior.

The inability of many students to read and comprehend what they have read is a major concern of the educators at the practicum site. As a result of this concern, the teachers engaged in a faculty study of strategies for teaching reading comprehension. This 35 hour inservice was conducted by a county reading coordinator. The strategies included prediction, story mapping, question-answer relations and request, a reciprocal questioning procedure. As part of the inservice, the teachers observed each other teaching a lesson using the

different strategies and offered feedback. These instructional strategies have been noted during both formal and informal observations.

Even though there has been inservice training, the problem of deficient reading performance continues to exist at the school site. To document this, an informal survey of teachers at the school was conducted (Appendix A:48). Sixty two percent of teachers cited slow, fragmented, word-by-word reading caused by poor sight vocabulary and a deficiency in word attack skills, as a major reason for inadequate reading achievement. The result is a decrease in the student's reading fluency and thereby reading comprehension. The student reads slow and laboriously and can lose continuity of the meaning between words.

Standardized reading tests also document low performance in reading. The MacMillan Series r reading assessment tests are administered at the end of each reading

level. The average score for the first semester at the practicum site indicated that 60 percent of the students First through Sixth grade achieved mastery in comprehension skills.

Many students are placed in instructional reading groups that are not commiserate with the grade placement of the student. The informal survey (Appendix A:48) indicates that 43 percent of the students are reading below their actual grade and month placement.

Additional comments on the survey (Appendix A:48) also indicates the students lack of ability to read critically. Students must understand a passage well enough to be able to interpret, apply, analyze and evaluate the material. This area of critical reading needs to be addressed.

The practicum site offers an academic summer school for at risk students. Criteria for attending the extended year program is that students must be at least one year below grade level in reading or math based on the county's Pupil

Progression Chart. The academic summer program extends the school year for six additional weeks. This year 32 percent of the students at the practicum site have been recommended for the academic extended year program based on their reading performance. Attendance is mandatory for promotion.

Another method of understanding the pupil performance in reading is to compare the scores of the students in this setting with the scores from other schools in the district. Students at the practicum site are administered the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), standardized achievement test each spring. For the 1988-89 school, the total reading percentile for the practicum school was at the 52nd percentile. The total reading for the district was the 56th percentile.

The above data documents the problem in student performance in reading at School X. This practicum project will search for a viable solution to solve the problem of low student

performance in literal and critical reading comprehension. The focus of this practicum will be to increase reading performance in the 14 targeted third grade students. The objectives selected for this practicum are as follows:

1. After the period of implementation of the paired reading program, there will be a 25 percent increase in litera! reading comprehension as evaluated by the QRI.
2. After the period of implementation of the paired reading program, there will be a 25 percent increase in expressing and identifying supportive evidence of main idea as evaluated by the QRI.
3. After the period of implementing the paired reading program, there will be a 25 percent increase in the critical skills of drawing conclusions as evaluated by the QRI.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategies

> "Many students of normal intelligence in the elementary grades read at below grade level despite a reduced pace in developmental reading instruction and participation in remedial reading programs from the onset of formal reading instruction." (Bohlen, 1988).

These students are usually placed in the low or bottom group and seldom progress beyond that low reading group throughout their years of formal reading instruction. Reading, especially in the content area becomes a frustration for these students. The major concern for classroom teachers must be to implement techniques of reading instruction that enable the unskilled reader to achieve success.

Two subskills that have been identified as important in enhancing comprehension are fast, accurate word recognition and fluent reading. Good readers must attend to both of these tasks simultaneously. To do this, requires that word decoding

be done automatically. In this way, attention can be focused on the higher level skill of comprehending the written message.

A review of the professional literature relevant to this problem emphasizes the importance of having many opportunities to read and the role of practice in developing automaticity. The amount of time spent in reading is and important variable in reading achievement. Goodlad, cited by Rossman (1987), estimated that elementary students spend less than six percent of class time (less than 10 minutes per day) reading contextual material. Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Elfrieda and Scott, 1985) synthesizes extensive research and concluded that reading is not something that is mastered once and for all at a certain age. It is a skill that must be practiced in order to improve. The best practice is that which involves the whole skill of reading. A review of the research suggests several ways to develop rapid, accurate word recognition and fluency in reading.

On strategy is to increase oral reading rate. In order to establish automatic decoding and improve comprehension accuracy, reading rate must be an emphasis in instruction (O'Shea and O'Shea, 1988). A slow pace may help students master individual words or syllables, but may cause the reader to loose the meaning of the sentence because of constraints of short-term memory.

Breznitz (1987) conducted four separate studies to determine the effects of decoding mistakes and comprehension of text passages at fastest and slowed reading rates. Students were required to read passages accurately at a natural oral reading speed. Comprehension was monitored. The students were then encouraged to accelerate the pace by 20 percent to obtain a maximal oral reading rate. Comprehension was again checked. The researcher found that increased reading rates reduced overall errors in word recognition and increased comprehension. The researcher concluded that if students

could stop worrying about diction, accent, pronunciation, substitutions and other relatively insignificant read errors and concentrated on speed, the reader would experience greater comprehension and accuracy.

Another researcher who supports the practice of increasing oral reading rates as a means of developing comprehension in reading is Casanova (1988). The author describes a strategy in which pairs of students read to each other. The students took turns at being the "teacher" and "student". As the "student" read, the "teacher" asked questions and encouraged the "student" to speed up the reading rate. The "teacher" also noted errors in word recognition and shared these with the "student" at the end of the session.

Another method for increasing reading comprehension involves chunking. Automatic recognition of words is insufficient for meaningful reading. When words are read one at a time a reader cannot gain meaning. Words have meaning

only when they are chunked into larger, meaningful phrases (Kren, O'Shea and Reid, 1989).

A study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of training students to become aware of and recognize intra sentences and phrases to increase comprehension. The findings concluded that readers who chunk text into meaningful phrases have overall gains in fluency, comprehension and speed.

An alternative strategy for increasing reading ability is the Neurological Impress Method (McAllister, 1989). In this method, the teacher is positioned behind the reader, reading into the student's ear while running a finger along under the words in the text. The student reads along with the teacher, keeping pace with the teacher while eventually leading the reading.

Research findings about the effectiveness of this method in increasing fluency and comprehension are inconclusive. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the student who experiences

the Neurological Impress Method are more motivated to read independently and develop more positive attitudes toward reading.

Another strategy for improving reading comprehension, rapid word recognition and fluency encourages parental involvement. More and more parents are wanting to take an active role in the education of children. An ideal vehicle to encourage this involvement is Paired Reading. Paired Reading is a process in which the child chooses the reading material, regardless of the level of difficulty (Topping, 1987). The parent and student read orally together. This technique allows for the child to be supported through texts of high readability levels.

This reading coupled together with rapid, immediate support, frees children from word-by-word decoding. This enables the student to read must more fluently with greater emphasis on contextual clues. The child can still deploy word

attack strategies but if recognition is not rapid and fluent within 5 seconds, assistance is immediately given.

The research of Topping (1987) indicates that paired reading has a positive impact on children. The technique has been found to improve reading comprehension more than reading accuracy by virtue of making the reader more fluent, confident and contextually oriented. One of the fringe benefits of paired reading is the positive involvement of parents in the reading development of their children.

An alternative strategy for increasing reading fluency and comprehension involves repeated reading. The repeated reading of connected discourse is not a new instructional strategy. For many years children have been learning to read by rereading text over and over until they could read the text fluently.

There are many different repeated reading procedures which have been reported. Although the methods differ, they

share one common goal: to increase the fluency of the slow, halting, word-by-word reader. These methods share one common strategy: to reread a meaningful, contextual passage until oral reading is fluid and flowing.

Dowhower (1987), studied the effects of repeated reading on second grade transitional students. This researcher collected evidence that indicated a positive effect of repeated reading on reading rate and word recognition. There was evidence that these fluency gains in passages transferred to new passages.

Dowhower (1987), reports that the effects of repeated reading on comprehension are not as well substantiated. The research did not always assess comprehension. If comprehension was addressed, it was indirectly assessed. There is indirect evidence that repeated reading may facilitate overall comprehension by helping children read at a more accurate and automatic level.

O'Shea and O'Shea (1988) support the use of repeated reading as a means of increasing reading comprehension. These researchers conducted a study of repeated reading in contextual practice. Students read passages from 150-250 words in length until they reached an acceptable fluency level. Once a student reached the appropriate fluency rate, the reader was instructed to focus on recall of the story.

These authors offered several options for the repeated reading procedure. The teacher may have the students read the passages together as choral reading or silently by themselves. Students may work in pairs offering corrective feedback or through the use of language masters and tape recorders.

Another method of repeated reading is offered by Koskenin and Blum (1986). It is the contention of these two authors that poor readers would benefit from a cooperative strategy that gives them practice toward gaining fluency in a

supportive situation. Based on this, they describe a strategy of students working in pairs for a series of repeated reading with feedback being given after each reading. Students need not to develop a fluency rate before choosing a different selection.

During the process of reviewing the research, it became clear that a student's ability to learn from printed materials and to benefit from reading is greatly influenced by automaticity. Automaticity is manifested when the reader can decode words automatically as evidenced by fast and accurate word recognition and focus attention on comprehending the written message (Kren, O'Shea and Reid, 1989). This ability is possible for most students. It is the responsibility of the teacher to develop this ability.

While reviewing the research, it became evident that there are many ways to develop reading automaticity in students. This practicum writer feels that particular strategies work best for certain teachers. Various strategies work best

with different students as well. There is no one method that is best.

Reading fluency and automaticity does not guarantee that readers will become thoughtful, strategic readers. Teachers need to explain that reading goes beyond decoding; it includes analyzing and elaborating ideas in text. The effectiveness with which the student reads is largely influenced by their ability to read critically or think critically while reading. Research suggests that instruction in thinking skills is neither widespread nor successful (Paris, 1987). While students learn to read a wide variety of materials, they develop few skills for examining the nature of the ideas that they take away with them.

According to Valaities (1988), teaching critical reading is a two-fold process for the teacher. First, they must help students expand their knowledge in the content area. Readers are able to understand what they read by integrating the

knowledge they already possess with the information on the printed page. Secondly, they must teach students the skills involved in reading critically. The earlier these skills are incorporated throughout a child's education, the better.

California is beginning a series of reforms directed toward enhancing students' critical thinking skills. A state advisory committee consulting with prominent critical thinking experts identified skills which they perceived to be essential for critical thinking (Walsh, 1988). These skills were classified into three broad categories: 1) classifying issues and terms, 2) judging and utilizing information, and 3) drawing conclusions. These generic skills remain the same through grade levels. Their level of sophistication and transfer are expected to progress. Each grade level has multiple subskills listed under each category (Appendix B:50).

Edys Quellmatz of Stanford University, as reported by Walsh (1988), has developed an approach for teaching critical

thinking. The approach provides direct instruction of an explicit set of strategies. She developed model lessons designed to guide students through a process of purposeful information gathering, analysis and interpretation, and explanation of conclusion.

Dr. Harold Herber, author of Teaching Reading in the Content Area, developed a method which has been supported by twenty years of research (Valaitis, 1988). His method has two primary components: preparation and guidance. During guidance, the teacher prepares the students to receive new information. It serves to motivate students and to provide them with a frame of reference into which to receive new ideas. Guidance requires that the teacher prepare a reading guide. The reading guide consists of two types of statements about the text for the student to verify or dispute. The statements in the literal set express essential information about the text. The statements in the second, or critical set, are

interpretations, applications, analyses and evaluations about the text.

Cornbleth as cited by Walsh (1988) noted that it is not possible to provide a blue print for teaching critical thinking. The nature of one's discipline, the diversity of the students' learning needs, and the teaching style of the teacher are all significant factors in the selection of teaching strategies.

Based on the work of O'Shea and O'Shea, Koskinen and Blum, and Dr. Herber, this practicum author is choosing to design and implement a paired repeated reading program for the targeted students functioning at least one year below grade level. Due to the fact that students will be actively engaged in reading contextual material for additional time periods, repeated reading should have a positive affect on student reading performance. The infusion of lessons which teach critical thinking skills and opportunities to utilize these skills should increase reading comprehension.

Repeated reading does not require massive financial, personnel and administrative resources. It does not require the purchase of additional equipment nor major classroom modifications. Repeated reading requires no extensive teacher training. It requires recognition on the part of educators that students do not spend enough time actively engaged in reading to attain automaticity. Repeated reading is a strategy which could be implemented with little resources and minimal teacher preparation time.

The added dimension of critical thinking skills requires more extensive training on the part of the teacher. The theory of teaching thinking has been practically nonexistent in most teacher training programs. Consequently, teachers can not be expected to automatically integrate these skills into the curriculum. Meaningful inservice is necessary for the integration of concept into teaching practice.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The first step in the practicum was to develop a supplemental reading program. The intent being two fold. First, to maximize reading performance of students by providing them with practice in reading meaningful passages until oral production was fluid, flowing and facile. Secondly, to enhance the student's critical thinking skills. The writer chose the paired reading program since the literature reviewed revealed a high success rate for unsuccessful readers. Experiences to develop problem solving strategies and critical thinking skills were incorporated into the paired reading program.

After gaining approval of the repeated reading program from the administration, the writer then met with the Assistant Principal for Instruction. Together the writer and Assistant Principal identified a targeted group of students based on basal

placement, academic performance, and CTBS test scores. These students were functioning at least one year below grade level, received below average grades and were ranked in the 40th percentile or below on the standardized test.

Paired reading required that the teacher randomly pair students within the classroom. The students selected short passages from materials currently being used for instruction. The students read the passages silently. The student then read the passage aloud three times. After the second and third reading, a critique was made on the reader's self evaluation sheet (Appendix C:52). Afterwards, the listener provided feedback as to how the reading had improved. Finally, the students reversed rolls and repeated the entire process.

When students became proficient with the paired repeated program, the second dimension of critical thinking was incorporated into the program. On alternate days, the students' reading material was preselected from the content

areas. After completion of the repeated reading strategy, the students were to respond to a set of literal and critical statements about the text by either verifying or disputing them. Since partners had to agree on the answers, students vocalized their thought processes as well as the necessary background knowledge. This allowed students to utilize the behavioral patterns which were developed during the critical reading guided instruction period. In addition, students became active participants in the learning process.

Repeated reading is an excellent tool for this type of activity. Rarely does a competent reader read an expository passage from beginning to end, only once as students are so often instructed to do. Parts of the text which require interpretation, analysis and evaluation often require rereading several times.

Prior to implementation, the writer administered the Quantitative Reading Inventory (QRI) to each student

individually. From this the author gathered data concerning reading rate, accuracy and comprehension. The students' reading rate was measured by timing the readers' oral reading. The reading rate was represented in Words Per Minute (WPM). This was calculated by multiplying the total number of words in the passage by 60 then dividing by the number of seconds. Reading accuracy was measured by the number of words in the passage read correctly. Substitutions, deletions, additions, and mispronunciations were counted as errors. Any word which had to be supplied by the evaluator was counted as an error. Comprehension was assessed by eight questions per passage: one main idea, three literal, and four inference of drawing conclusions.

This writer then met with the students involved and explained the paired repeated reading program in detail. The author explained and modeled the role of the reader. The writer discussed and modeled the role of the listener.

Opportunities were given to practice the role of the reader and listener. These practice sessions were monitored by the instructor and feedback concerning this practice was given to the students. This practice proved to be an essential step in the program. Students at this age have a difficult time offering constructive feedback. They need to be provided with guidelines for offering positive comments on improvement.

Equally important, students need to understand the importance of the role of the listener. The instructor gave students practice in listening for improvement by first reading a few sentences in halting monotone with many errors. The instructor then reread the same passage with expression and fewer mispronunciations. The second week of the practicum it became evident the student needed a structured format to help keep the listener on task. The listeners sheet was developed (Appendix D:54). The third step in implementing the program involved instructing the students in how to select passages.

Students were instructed to select short passages of approximately 50 words in length. As the passages were read three times, this insured the brevity of the activity. Students were also instructed to select interesting passages from a variety of source including the basal, library books, trade books, content books, and student publications. After sufficient practice, the paired repeated reading program was then implemented with the targeted group of students.

Students were originally paired according to student choice. Each week the students were paired differently. There was no one way to pair the students. Pairing was done according to same sex, differing personality types, teacher choice and student choice. This frequent changing of partners was to maintain harmony among the groups and allow the students a variety of partners.

On two occasions problems arose with grouping. The problem involved students not using time wisely for the task at

hand. These students were instructed that working together was a privilege and that they must adhere to the class guidelines. The students were temporarily removed from the group and worked independently. When the students returned to the paired reading groups, their attitudes had changed from uncooperative to cooperative. As evidence of the strategy's success emerged, the students became even more committed in participation. To avoid such pitfalls it is important to establish rules and guidelines early in the training component. Working cooperatively in pairs makes learning more enjoyable and most students will adhere to the rules in order to participate.

At the beginning of implementation, the students were hesitant to participate in the program. Low self esteem as a result of poor reading ability, left the students timid about reading orally to a peer. The positive comments following the oral rereading procedure bolstered the students confidence. By the third week of implementation, the students were eager to

divide into the perspective groups and participate. This enthusiasm for reading and the improvement in student's self concept was one of the more rewarding results of the paired reading technique.

The practicum writer monitored the paired repeated reading daily for the first three weeks. Thereafter, the writer monitored the program on a weekly basis. A biweekly conference was held between the practicum writer and the supervising teacher. The purpose was to identify and discuss existing and potential problems and to generate solutions for these (Appendix E:56). Information was gathered as to method of pairing students and the effectiveness of the pairing.

During the third week of the implementation, a conference was held between the practicum author and the targeted students. This conference was aimed at assessing the students attitudes toward reading and the paired reading program. Other conferences were held of the ninth week and

at the termination of the program. Results from these conferences indicated that the majority of the students experienced a positive change in attitude toward the reading process and their abilities as readers. Two male students remained unresponsive throughout the implementation period. The writer believed that for these students, additional intervention was necessary. The writer and supervising teacher initiated the necessary paperwork and referred them to the guidance counselor for further help. The names were also submitted to the special services team. Further assessment by the school psychologist is pending.

During the course of implementation of the paired repeated program, one of the targeted students moved. This created an uneven number of students. The teacher assumed the role of partner for the odd student. The teacher indicated that this experience was invaluable. This pairing allowed the instructor to monitor the progress from a different perspective.

It also created the opportunity for more sophisticated feedback and instructional facilitation.

Post testing of the targeted students occurred on the fourteenth week of implementation. Results of this testing was compared to the pretest scores on the QRI. Feedback from the administration, the target group's instructor and the involved students was gathered. These results were used to determine if objectives of the practicum were met and to review the success of the program.

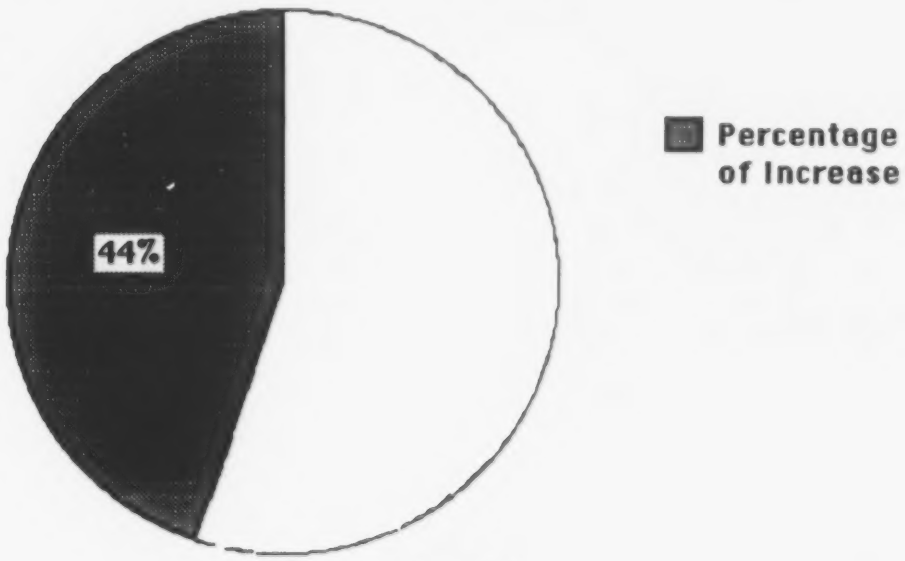
CHAPTER IV

Results

The focus of this practicum was to increase reading performance in the 14 targeted students. One student withdrew during the implementation period. The success of the program was measured by tabulating data from the pretest and comparing those results with the data collected on the post test. Based on the positive feedback received and the data collected throughout the implementation, this writer concluded that the increase in reading performance was a direct result of the paired repeated reading program.

The first objective: There will be a 25 percent increase in literal comprehension -- was successfully met (Appendix F:58). Upon completion of the implementation period, the results showed that 62 percent or eight students increased their literal comprehension scores. The class average rose from 1.923 items correct to 2.769 items correct. The results show there

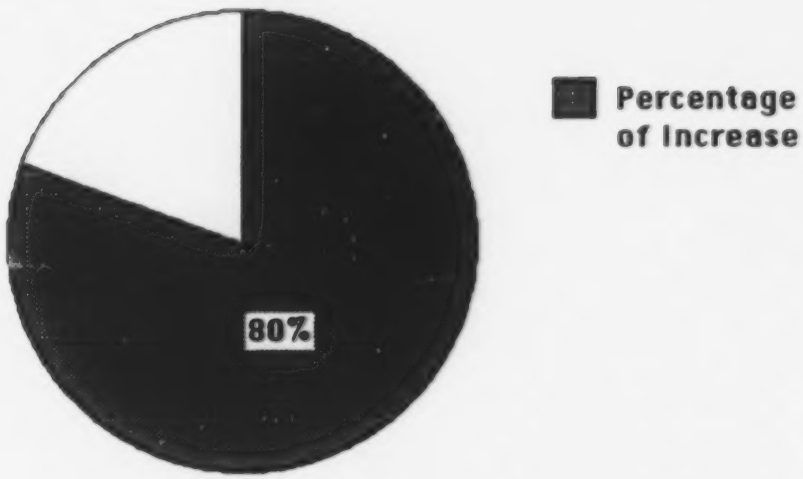
was a percentage increase of 44 for the class. The percentage of increase was computed by taking the difference of the pretest post test averages and dividing by the pretest score. Graph 1 below shows the percentage of increase for the class.



Graph I

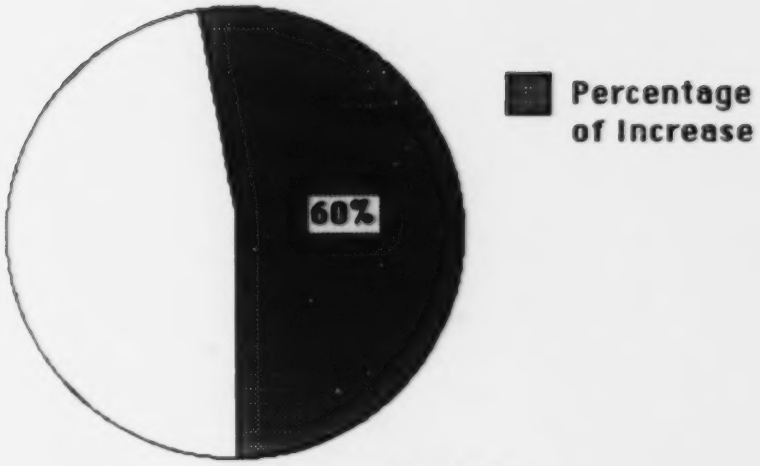
The second objective: there will be a 25 percent increase in expressing main idea and identifying supportive evidence --

was successfully met. Prior to implementation, five of the 14 students were able to successfully state the main idea of a given passage. After the implementation period, this number rose to nine students who were able to identify and support the main idea (Appendix G:60). Pretest scores showed a class average of .307 items correct. Post test scores indicated a class average of .642 items correct. This equals an 80 percentage increase in main idea comprehension. Percentage of increase is computed by taking the difference of the two class averages and dividing by the pretest average. It should be noted that there was only one question dealing with main idea. This fact may lead one to question the validity of the results. The following graph below show the percentage of increase in identifying main idea.



Graph 2

The writer also used the QRI to measure the success of the final objective: there would be a 25 percent increase in the critical skill of drawing conclusions. This objective was found to be successfully met. Data shows that of the 14 targeted students, 62 percent showed an increase in the comprehension skill of drawing conclusions, while 38 percent showed no change. The class average of total questions correct rose from 1.538 to 2.461, a percentage increase of 60 (Appendix H:62). The following graph is a summary of this data.

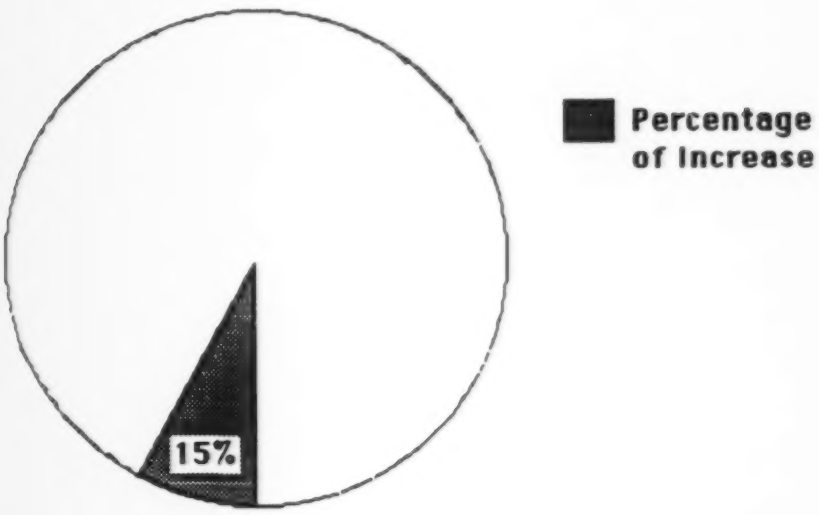


Graph 3

Of interest to the writer, there were improvements in areas other than reading comprehension. There were also significant gains in the readers' reading rate and more significantly, there was a decrease in the percent of reading miscues.

Data obtained from the QRI indicates that 92 percent of the students increased their reading rates. One student's rate remained unchanged. This equated to a 15 percent increase for the group (Appendix I:64). The next graph shows the

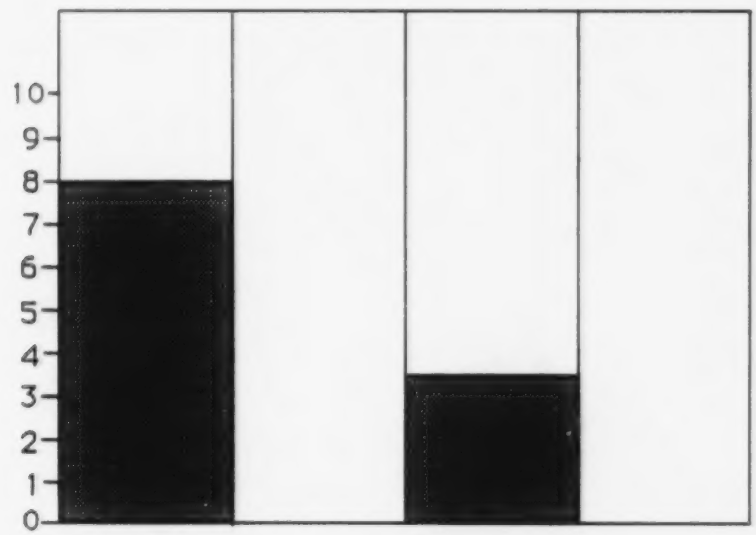
percentage of increase in reading rate.



Graph 4

There was an even more significant percentage of decrease in word recognition errors. All students but one showed a decrease in word recognition errors (Appendix J:66). Class percentage of error decreased from eight percent to four percent. This equated to a 50 percentage decrease of word recognition errors for the class. Since the total number of

words in the passage differed for the pre and post test, it was necessary to figure percentages of errors for comparison rather than total number of word errors. This line graph shows a comparison of the percent of word recognition errors prior to and after implementation.



Graph 5

These findings are of no surprise to the writer. This data supports current research which states that automatic readers are capable of reading significantly faster and more accurately than their nonautomatic peers. When the decoding of printed material is being done automatically, the readers conscious attention is freed to focus on the comprehension of what they are reading (Rossman, 1987).

Results from this practicum indicate that fast accurate word recognition, coupled with strategies to develop critical thinking skills in reading will increase the students academic success. If we accept this theory, we must focus our attention on methods for increasing the amount of time students spend reading. We must also guide students in developing strategic skills for critical thinking.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Due to the success for the targeted group and the feedback received from teachers, students and parents, the supervising teacher will continue to utilize this paired reading procedure with future students. It was the writer's recommendation that all teachers at the practicum school implement this program for their classes in the future. This recommendation was accepted by the administration. Plans are being developed to inservice teachers and implementation will occur in the fall.

The writer would also recommend that the district level supervisor for reading study the results of this project for possible use in all elementary schools in the district. If accepted, the author would prepare a manual explaining the paired reading strategy. The author would also be willing to conduct a training session for integrating critical thinking skills

into the reading curriculum.

This basic repeated reading procedure has implications for use within the home as a tutorial program, providing there is support from the administration and the parents. Training could be given to the parents and reinforcement could be given at home. This would ensure additional time spend reading for the student. It would also encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Reading Survey

READING SURVEY

1. The majority of the students in your class have an instructional reading level equivalent to their current grade placement.

AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE

2. The majority of the student in your class are deficient in word attack skills.

AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE

3. The majority of the students in your class have developed fragmented, word-by-word reading.

AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE

4. Each student in your class is actively engaged in reading contextual material during reading instruction every day.

AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE

5. Do you provide additional structured time for reading each day?_____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Appendix B
Third Grade Critical Thinking Skills

Third Grade Critical Thinking Skills

I. Clarifying Issues and Terms

A. Makes careful observations
B. Identifies and expresses main idea, problem, or central issues
C. Identifies similarities and differences
D. Organizes items into defined categories
E. Defines categories for unclassified information
F. Identifies information relevant to a problem
G. Formulates questions
H. Recognizes different points of view

II. Judging and Utilizing Information

A. Identifies obvious stereotypes
B. Distinguishes between fact and opinion
C. Identifies and explains sequence and prioritizing
D. Identifies obvious assumptions
E. Identifies cause and effect relationships

III. Drawing Conclusions

A. Recognizes the adequacy of data
B. Identifies cause and effect relationships
C. Puts simple hypothesis into "if, then" sentences

Appendix C
Self Evaluation Sheet

DATE: _____

Reading #1
How well did you read?

Fantastic Good Fair Not So Good Terrible

Reading #2
How well did you read?

Fantastic Good Fair Not So Good Terrible

Reading #3
How well did you read?

Fantastic Good Fair Not So Good Terrible

Appendix D
Listening Sheet

How did your partner's reading get better?

Did they know more words?

Did they read more smoothly?

Did they read with more expression?

Tell your partner one thing that was better about their reading.

Appendix E
Weekly Conference Sheet

Weekly Conference Sheet

Date: _____

1. What problems, if any, have arisen?

2. How did you solve the problem?

3. What is the student's attitude toward the program?

4. What method was used to pair students for the week?

5. Is this method effective?

6. What were the pros and cons for this method?

Appendix F
A Comparison of Total Items Correct
in Literal Comprehension

A Comparison of Total Items Correct in
Literal Comprehension on the QRI Pre and Post Test

Student	Pre	Post	Results
A	2	4	+2
B	3*	*	*
C	2	2	NC
D	0	3	+3
E	2	4	+2
F	2	2	NC
G	1	3	+2
H	3	4	+1
I	2	3	+1
J	2	2	NC
K	2	3	+1
L	3	1	-2
M	3	3	NC
N	1	2	+1
Class average of correct responses	1.923	2.769	

- 62 percent showed an increase in scores (8 students)
- 31 percent showed no change in scores (4 students)
- 7 percent showed a decrease score (1 student)

By taking the difference of the 2 class averages and dividing by the pretest average, the results shows a percentage increase of 44.

* = Denotes no score as student moved during implementation.
NC = Denotes no change
\+ = Denoted increase of 1 or more
\- = Denoted decrease of 1 or more

Appendix E
A Comparison of Total Items Correct
in Expressing Main Idea and
Identifying Supportive Evidence

A Comparison of Total Items Correct in Expressing Main Idea and Identifying Supportive Evidence

Student	Pre	Post	Results
A	0	0	NC
B	1	*	*
C	0	1	+1
D	0	1	+1
E	1	1	NC
F	0	1	+1
G	1	0	-1
H	0	1	+1
I	1	1	NC
J	0	1	+1
K	0	0	NC
L	1	1	NC
M	0	1	+1
N	0	0	NC
Class average of correct responses	.307	.642	

- 42.5 percent showed an increase in scores (6 students)
- 42.5 percent showed no change in scores (6 students)
- 7 percent showed a decrease score (1 student)

- This graph shows a 4 point increase in comprehension of main idea.
  This equals an 80% increase.

* = Denotes no score as student moved during implementation.
NC = Denotes no change
\+ = Denoted increase of 1 or more
\- = Denoted decrease of 1 or more

Appendix G
A Comparison of Total Items Correct
in Drawing Conclusion

A Comparison of Total Items Correct in
Drawing Conclusions on the QRI Pre and Post Test

Student	Pre	Post	Results
A	1	3	+2
B	2	*	*
C	1	3	+2
D	2	3	+1
E	2	3	+1
F	2	2	NC
G	0	1	+1
H	2	2	NC
I	1	3	+2
J	2	3	+1
K	2	2	NC
L	2	2	NC
M	2	2	NC
N	1	3	+2
Class average of correct responses	1.538	2.461	

- 62% of the students showed an increase in drawing conclusions (8 students)

- 38 showed no change in drawing conclusions (5 students)

* = Denotes no score as student moved during implementation.
NC = Denotes no change
\+ = Denoted increase of 1 or more

Appendix I
A Comparison of Reading Rate

A Comparison of Reading Rate on the
QRI Pre and Post Test

Student	Pre	Post	Results	Percentage of increase reading rate
A	68	73	+15	22%
B	69*	*	*	*
C	68	69	+1	1.4%
D	44	46	+2	4.5
E	66	69	+3	4.5
F	45	60	+15	32
G	101	101	NC	NC
H	33	41	+8	24
I	40	50	+10	25
J	46	58	+12	26
K	55	58	+3	5
L	38	41	+13	34
M	33	51	+18	54
N	40	42	+2	5
Class average	52	58		

- 92% of the students showed an increase in reading rate (12 students)
- 8% of the students showed no change in reading rate (1 student)
- This graph shows a 6 point difference in the class average on the pre and post test. This equals a 15 percentage increase in the number of words per minute read.

* = Denotes no score as student moved during implementation.
NC = Denotes no change
\+ = Denoted increase of 1 or more WPM

Appendix J
A Comparison of Percentage of
Word Recognition Errors

A Comparison of Percentage of Word Recognition Errors on the QRI Pre and Post Test

Student	Pre		Post		Percentage of decrease in word recognition errors
A	23	9%	8	3	66%
B	18*	7%	*	*	*
C	10	4	7	3	25
D	20	8	12	5	38
E	9	3	6	2	33
F	32	12	9	3	75
G	15	6	6	2	66
H	29	11	9	3	72
I	32	12	15	6	50
J	10	4	10	4	NC
K	17	7	13	5	29
L	31	12	21	8	33
M	13	5	9	3	40
N	18	7	6	2	71
Class average		8%	4%		50%

- 92% of the students showed an decrease in word recognition errors (12 students)
- 8% of the students showed no change in the number of word recognition errors (1 student)
- This graph shows a 4 point drop in the average of word recognition errors. This is equal to a 50 percentage decrease.

* = Denotes no score as student moved during implementation.
NC = Denotes no change
\+ = Denotes a decrease of 1 or more word recognition errors

END

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Date Filmed

March 21,1991